

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 6-12 are pending.

The Office Action stated the "Claims 1-4, 6-8, 10-14, 16, and 18-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Willard (US 5,427,166, of record) and further in view of Willard (US 5,868,190, newly cited). As best depicted in Figures 1 and 4, Willard '166 teaches a pneumatic tire construction having a chafer reinforcement fabric 27 and the following bead reinforcement structure: rubber support portion 34, rubber seat portion 26, and rubber toe portion 28. While these components are depicted as three separate portions, one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have found it obvious to form the reinforcement as a single layer of rubber in view of Willard '190 (Column 8, Lines 25-35), in which case the single layer of rubber or "chafer" would contact the rim flange and extend axially inward and around the bead as required by the claimed invention. It is noted that Willard '190 is directed to an extremely similar tire construction as compared to that of Willard '166, wherein Willard'166 and Willard'190 describe the same three bead reinforcement portions. It is further emphasized that Willard '190 suggests a preferred construction in which the three bead reinforcement portions are a single, unitary layer."

Applicant agrees that Willard '190 suggests that the rim interface components form a single unitary construction as stated in column 6 lines 26-34. However, they are not "a single, unitary construction of a single elastomer" as set forth in amended claim 1. This is further supported by the fact that Willard '166 sets forth that the rubber seat portion and the rubber toe portion forming the "rim interface components" are constructed of at least two different types of rubber material. (see column 15 lines 12-17 and lines 40-45)

Moreover, claim 1 has been limited to a pair of sidewalls extending between the tread belt package and the bead area, a rim flange protector and sidewalls. Further, the bead area, the rim flange protector and the sidewalls are claimed as being constructed of a single, unitary construction of a single elastomer. This unitary construction is set forth on page 12 lines 4-6 of the application as originally filed. Since this combination of components formed into a single, unitary construction of a single elastomer is not shown or described in any of the cited references taken alone or in combination, amended claim 1 should be held allowable.

During a telephone conversation between the undersigned and Examiner Fischer, the latter mentioned an uncited reference 5,795,416 to Willard et al. In reviewing this reference, there is described a sidewall protective complex 40 which is formed of sub-components including sidewall rubber 42 and bead support rubber 34. Accordingly, this reference does not teach or suggest the bead area, the rim flange protector and the sidewalls being formed into a single, unitary construction of a single elastomer as in amended claim 1.

Claims 2-4 and 6-12 are dependent upon base claim 1 and are also allowable.

Conclusion

The claims should be allowed.

No new matter is entered by this Amendment.

Applicant has made a diligent effort to amend the claims of this application to overcome the Examiner's objections. If there are still some issues to be resolved, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION BY FACSIMILE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (Fax No. 703-872-9306) on May 5, 2004.

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